## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**Listing of Claims**

The following listing of claims replaces all previous listings or versions thereof:

1-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A method of preparing ~~a bacterial~~an *Escherichia coli* culture for transformation at increased efficiency as compared to *E. coli* K12 MG1655, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~

culturing the ~~bacteria~~*E. coli* to an optical density at 650 nm ~~in excess~~ of at least 0.4 in a medium, ~~using glycerol as a carbon source; and~~

~~transforming the bacteria with a foreign DNA molecule~~.

wherein the *E. coli* is an MDS strain lacking bases 263080-324632, 1398351-1480278, 2556711-2563500, 2754180-2789270, 2064327-2078613, 3451565-3467490, 2464565-2474198, 1625542-1650865, 4494243-4547279, 3108697-3134392, 1196360-1222299, 564278-585331, 15388-20563, 263080-324632, 564278-585331, 602639-608573, 1398351-1480278, 2064327-2078613, 2507650-2515969, 2556711-2563500, 2754180-2789270, 379293-387870, 389121-399029, 2992959-2996892, 3182796-3189712, 3451565-3467490, 2464565-2474198, 1625542-1650785, 4494243-4547279, 3108697-3134392, 1196360-1222299, 687074-688268, 1386912-1396646, 2099418-2135739, 2284410-2288200, 3359747-3365277, 3648921-3651343, 1128637-1140209, 1960605-1977294, 1995085-2021700, 4553059-4594581, 522062-529348, 728616-738185, 1525914-1531648, 3616623-3623309, 3759620-3767868, 1041253-1049768, 1085329-1096603, 2163172-2175230, 3578769-3582674, and 3718262-3719704 of the *E. coli* strain K12 MG1655.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the medium is Terrific Broth.

[9]7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the culturing is done at in excess of 26°C.

[10]**8**. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[5]]10, wherein the transformants recovered are in excess of $10^{10}$ transformants per microgram of introduced DNA.

9. (New) The method of claim 5, further comprising transforming the bacteria with a foreign DNA molecule.

10. (New) The method of claim 5, wherein the optical density at 650 nm is at least 0.6.

11. (New) The method of claim 5, wherein the optical density at 650 nm is at least 1.0.